

Emergency Message for U.S. Citizens: Hurricane Watch Issued

Nassau, Bahamas, October 2, 2016

The following Emergency Message is being transmitted to alert U.S. citizens to the development and progress of Hurricane Matthew. The National Hurricane Center (NHC; www.nhc.noaa.gov) reports that Hurricane Matthew is headed for The Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands and a hurricane watch has been issued for Southeastern Bahamas, including the Inaguas, Mayaguana, Acklins, Crooked Island, Long Cay, and Ragged Island, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. A hurricane watch means that hurricane conditions are possible within the watch area, generally within 48 hours. Hurricane storm conditions in terms of wind are expected to reach the area by October 4. U.S. citizens residing and traveling in coastal areas in this region should be alert to flooding. Small craft operators throughout The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands should seek safe harbor for their vessels.

Given the approaching hurricane, there is limited time available for a safe departure. The Department of State has authorized family members of U.S. government employees to depart The Bahamas in advance of Hurricane Matthew. We recommend U.S. citizens depart The Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands if possible and work with commercial air carriers to leave prior to the arrival of the hurricane. Airports will close once conditions deteriorate and safe travel is not possible. We recommend those citizens who are unable to depart to shelter in place in a secure location.

Travelers should apprise family and friends in the United States of their whereabouts, and keep in close contact with their tour operator, hotel staff, and local officials for evacuation instructions. Travelers should also protect their travel and identity documents against loss or damage, as the need to replace lost documentation could hamper or delay return to the United States.

The U.S. Embassy advises all U.S. citizens living in and/or visiting this region take certain basic precautions in preparation for the storm.

Supplies and Preparation:

- If you are living in this region: Ensure you have adequate supplies of food, water, medications, and other essential supplies on hand. It is not unusual for stores and shops to close before, during, and after a hurricane. Check your generators and make sure you have an adequate supply of fuel; cut down any dead foliage and remove any debris around your home; secure any items that could become dangerous flying objects (patio furniture, umbrellas, barbecues, etc.); have the tools and supplies on hand to secure your house (plywood, nails, shutters, etc.). Upper floors in high-rise buildings are at increased risk of windows being blown out, due to the fact that wind speed increases with height.
- If you are a tourist, talk to your hotel front desk to learn about the hotel's emergency plan for a hurricane. Notify your family and friends of your whereabouts and your plans until the

storm passes. Be sure to have an adequate supply of necessary prescriptions and medications on hand.

During the Storm:

- Do not go outside, flying debris is lethal;
- Do not watch the storm from beaches as storm surge, riptides, and rogue waves are hazardous;
- Stay inside in an interior room of your residence (bathroom, large closet, or pantry). Choose a room with little or no windows that is located away from the exterior wall of the residence;
- Stay off your home/cell phone and radio. Keep all means of communication available for an emergency;
- If a member of your family sustains an injury during the storm, report the injury and degree of severity to the local authorities as soon as possible.

U.S. citizens in The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) should monitor local radio, the National Weather Service and local media to stay aware of any weather developments in their area. The U.S. Embassy will update this emergency message if new information becomes available. American citizens should stay current with media coverage of local events and be aware of their surroundings at all times. For official information from the Bahamian and TCI governments regarding weather conditions, please monitor ZNS or other local media outlets.

For further information:

- See the [State Department's travel website](#) for the [Worldwide Caution](#), Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and [Bahamas Specific Information](#).
- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.
- Contact the U.S. Embassy in The Bahamas, located at 42 Queen Street (across from the British Colonial Hilton Hotel), Nassau; telephone: 242-322-1181; after hours emergency telephone: 242-357-7004; ACS unit fax: 242-356-7174; e-mail: ACSNASSAU@state.gov; web page: <http://nassau.usembassy.gov>. The Turks & Caicos Consular Agency is located at 2 Venture Ct., Grace Bay Suite 102E, Providenciales, Turks and Caicos. The Consular Agent is LeShelle Tull-Thomas (649-232-5713, TullThomasLS@state.gov).
- Call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).
- Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).